

BALBOA PARK MASTER PLAN

PLAN AMENDMENTS

THIRD DRAFT
May 2003

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BALBOA PARK MASTER PLAN AND CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE PARK BOULEVARD PROMENADE AMENDMENTS

The overall purposes of the amendments are:

- ▶ To increase the amount of space for the San Diego Zoo for conservation oriented, bioclimatic exhibits to facilitate the conservation, education, and research activities needed to save endangered and threatened species
- ▶ To improve the ease of visitor access to the North Prado, both now and given future growth,
- ▶ To strengthen the connection between the Zoo entry and other North Prado institutions.

These purposes are achieved by the following major physical changes enabled by these plan amendments:

1. Asphalt parking lots near Spanish Village and Natural History Museum are converted to a public promenade between the new Zoo entry and the Prado.
2. Zoo Parking lot is converted to Zoological Gardens, parking for the War Memorial Building, and a greenbelt that includes the miniature train and public open space.
3. The Zoo entry is reoriented toward the South, creating a stronger connection to the Prado and the rest of Balboa Park.
4. A 4803-space below-ground public parking structure is located in the North Prado, along Park Boulevard.
5. A new Transit Center with an integral new pedestrian bridge is located in the North Prado.
6. A new below ground transportation center near the Natural History Museum and a new Zoo secondary group entrance near the War Memorial are created to help manage group access to the North Prado.
7. Pedestrian and auto conflict are eliminated in the North Prado.

These plan amendments raise two notable policy issues: (1) the increase in Zoological Garden space and (2) the increase in parking in Central Mesa.

Zoological Garden Expansion

The current Central Mesa Precise Plan calls for the Zoo parking lot to remain a parking lot with improved landscaping. The plan amendments convert this parking lot to Zoological Gardens, greenbelt, Zoo group entry and parking adjacent to the War Memorial.

The Zoo parking lot is part of the Zoological Society's leasehold. The lease expires in 2034. As a result, any change in use prior to that time requires the agreement of both the Zoological Society and the City of San Diego.

Over time zoos have changed from menageries of animals in cages to concrete and moated exhibits, and finally the latest transition -- conservation-oriented, bioclimatic habitats. Today's conservation-oriented zoos require more space.

The modern Zoo facilitates conservation and research activities needed to save endangered and threatened species.

- Researchers and animal care specialists learn about animal reproduction, diet and social behavior contributing to saving species in the wild.
- Visitors are educated about the natural history and geography of animals as well as the plight of endangered species related to habitat loss and encroachment resulting from human activities.
- Animal reproduction contributes to genetic diversity and self-sustaining populations of species while increasing opportunities to reintroduce species to remaining safe habitats in the wild.

In 1984 the Zoological Society of San Diego adopted a long-range Bioclimatic Plan to guide the redevelopment of the Zoo. The goal was to create self-sustaining populations of threatened and endangered species and to enhance scientific research, conservation and education opportunities. The plan addressed animal behavior as it relates to both environmental considerations (such as the bioclimatic zones) and their complex social order.

In 1995 the planning and architectural staff of the Zoological Society realized the 1984 Bioclimatic Plan underestimated the space needed for redeveloping the Zoo's animal/botanical exhibits and related support areas. From concept to development, naturalistic exhibits were requiring substantially more space than anticipated. Also environmental rules and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements reduce the amount of usable acreage within the Zoo's current fence line.

In response to this shortfall of space, the Zoological Society

- Continued pursuing methods of using the current leasehold more efficiently through redevelopment of old exhibit areas.
- Explored additional opportunities to use the Wild Animal Park, considering the climate and other limiting factors.
- Focused on exhibits for species that need the coastal climate of Balboa Park.
- Downscaled some of the exhibit plans.
- Worked with the City's Working Group to explore possibility of use of Zoo parking lot for Zoological gardens.

These plan amendments implement the last of these actions related to the shortfall of space. The other on-going efforts listed above are on an independent track.

In December 2000 the final report of the city's Working Group for the "Proposed Balboa Park Master and Precise Plan Amendments and the Zoological Society of San Diego Leasehold" was published. This report included a discussion of options relating to Zoo expansion, parking, ideas for increasing open green and natural spaces as well as other Balboa Park issues.

All design teams taking part in the design charrette, with the exception of one, proposed that the San Diego Zoological Society be allowed to expand Zoo facilities within the parking lot area. A majority of the design options detailed a mix of Zoo use with parking and open green space. Benefits attributed to Zoo use of the parking lot were the elimination of unattractive surface parking lot and elimination of urban run off. Concerns related to Zoo use of the parking lot were the loss of parking spaces. However, the issue of restricting and intensifying land use was perceived as both a positive and negative. The positive being the value of improvements to the San Diego Zoo and its conservation and

education mission. The negative being “privatization”, that is the placement of the area inside the Zoo’s fence line.

Related to these observations on Zoo parking lot use, the Working Group identified the advantages of having a green belt along Park Boulevard. This would provide a “visual corridor and softer edge to the expanded development” and enhance the linkages between the Park and the communities to the north and to offset privately controlled land uses (Zoo) moving out towards Park Boulevard. The only identified disadvantage related to the greenbelt was that uses may be limited due to size and adjacency to Park Boulevard.

The Plan Amendments have been developed within the context of this direction from the City’s Working Group. A defined visual green corridor with pedestrian linkages and public open space are included. In addition the miniature train has been relocated within the greenbelt, adding both visual interest and an activity dynamic to the area. The greenbelt width ranges from 87 feet to 233 feet wide. This contrasts with the current planting strip of approximately 15 feet wide.

Parking

The currently adopted Central Mesa Precise Plan (p. 195) specifically calls for increased parking in Central Mesa. However, the current plan recommendations show only 165 to 665 additional parking spaces to serve future visitor demand in the Central Mesa. This modest increase is accomplished (in the current plan) by a new parking structure behind the Organ Pavilion.

In furtherance of the current plan objective to increase public parking in the Central Mesa, these Plan Amendments create a net increase of 2059 parking spaces in the North Prado.

A total of 5352 spaces are created as follows: The 4803-space public parking structure, 99 public parking spaces adjacent to the War Memorial Building, and 450 new employee spaces within the Zoo fence line (employee spaces draw employees out of the public lots thereby freeing up visitor parking for visitors).

A total of 3293 spaces are lost as follows: 2831 spaces in the Zoo lot, 103 spaces in the north Carousel lot, 215 spaces in the South Carousel lot, 101 spaces in the Natural History museum lot, 24 spaces on Park Boulevard and 19 spaces on Zoo Drive.

In 2000, the Working Group was presented with the information in Table 1 regarding the supply and demand for parking in Balboa Park.

Table 1 Parking Demand and Supply Data Presented to Zoo Working Group in 2000		
Institution/Use	Parking Data Presented to Working Group in 2000	Presenter of the information
San Diego Zoo	3216 visitor spaces needed in 2020 Adequate 85% of all days - more parking required 55 days each year)	Zoological Society of San Diego
Other cultural institutions in Central Mesa	3216 visitor spaces needed in 2020 (Adequate 85% of all days - more parking required 55 days each year)	Dr. Mick Hager on behalf of the Central Balboa Park Association
General User of the Park (National Recreation and Park Association standard)	2538 visitor spaces	Park and Recreation Department Staff
Recreational users of city operated facilities (organ pavilion, puppet theater, hall rentals, House of Hospitality offices/restaurant etc)	No information presented for these users	
Naval Medical Center	5150 total spaces needed; 2000 space deficit in 2020	Captain Patricia Denzel of the Naval Medical Center
City College	4000 total spaces needed in 2020	City College staff
Existing Total Parking Spaces	6659 in July 2000	Data collected by Park Rangers

The major determinants of the size of the parking structure were:

- 1) The popularity of the North Prado as a destination.

The North Prado includes many popular cultural institutions: the Zoo, Spanish Village, Natural History Museum, Rose Garden, Fleet Science Center, Prado complex, and Junior Theater. The Zoo by itself attracts 3.5 million visitors which is 50% of all the visitors to cultural institutions in the entire Central Mesa. Due to the area's popularity, the Zoo uses off-site parking areas 100 days per year to accommodate Zoo visitor parking demand.

- 2) Anticipated visitor growth.

Zoo visitors are projected to increase from 3.5 million in 2000 to 4.426 million in 2020. This 26% increase in visitors will bring a commensurate increase in parking demand.

Assuming 20% of the visitors arrive by alternate modes such as transit, and there are 3.3 persons per car, the Zoo parking demand alone in 2020 would be 3900 spaces (employee and visitor) on a "design day". A design day is a typically busy day and assumes off-site parking arrangements would be required at least 25 days a year.

Dr. Mick Hager, Executive Director of the Natural History Museum, reported to the Working Group in September 2000 that the other cultural institutions throughout the Central Mesa collectively have visitor attendance equal to that of the Zoo and anticipate a similar growth trend.

- 3) Replacement of Eliminated Spaces

At a minimum, the eliminated spaces (3293) need to be replaced, but this does not account for current parking deficits or future growth.

- 4) The physical and cultural constraints on the site.

The Park Boulevard Promenade Parking Structure was designed to respect the existing historical area and the existing leaseholds. For this reason the parking structure foot print is contoured around Spanish Village and the Natural History Museum. As such, a 4-level below-ground public parking structure can accommodate a maximum of 4803 public parking spaces.

Within the context of this information, the plan amendments include a 4803-space public parking structure for the following reasons:

1. Simply replacing the 3293 lost surface spaces is not sufficient because it does not account for current parking deficits or future growth demand.

2. Sizing the parking structure to only handle the Zoo parking demand (in 2020) of 3900 spaces ignores the fact it is **public** parking serving all park visitors and since this public parking is first-come/first-serve, the mix of visitors going to the North Prado institutions on a “design day” would be seriously under-served.
3. Sizing the parking structure larger than 4803 public parking spaces is impractical because of the physical constraints of the site.

For more background information on these and other planning issues, refer the Park Boulevard Promenade Draft Environmental Impact Report and the December 14, 2000 “Final Report of the Working Group for the Proposed Balboa Park Master and Precise Plan Amendments and the Zoological Society of San Diego Leasehold”.

In conjunction with the approved 1989 Balboa Park Master Plan and the 1992 Central Mesa Precise Plan, these plan amendments give definition and guidance to the future development of the Central Mesa of Balboa Park. The Balboa Park Master Plan, Central Mesa Precise Plan and these amendments will contribute to cultural, educational, recreational and social life of the entire San Diego region.

These amendments are organized in the same order as the approved Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan. Those plan text and graphics which changed as a result of the inclusion of the Park Boulevard Promenade are revised and included. All text which has been revised or added from the originally approved plans is underlined.

May 19, 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	PAGE
Purpose of the Plan	1
The Vision	3
DESIGN PRINCIPLES	5
Goals, Objectives, and Design Principles	7
THE MASTER PLAN	13
Master Plan Summary	15
<u>Conceptual Subarea Master Plans</u>	21
- El Prado West	25
- El Prado East and Spanish Village	29
- The Palisades	33
- Inspiration Point	37
- Central Operations Station	45
- Zoo Parking Lot and Florida Canyon	49
- Morley Field and Arizona Landfill	53
- Golden Hill	57
MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS	61
Land Use, Architecture and Site Design	63
Access, Circulation and Parking	67
Historic Preservation	89
Safety & Security	95
Horticulture	97
Lighting	107
Signage	113

TABLE OF CONTENTS, CONTINUED

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	119
Precise Plans	121
Phasing and Construction Costs	123
Financing	129
MASTER PLAN ANALYSIS	155
Planning Context	157
Land Use and Architecture	167
Access, Circulation and Parking	181
Topography, Soils, Geology	191
Visual Analysis	199
Horticulture	203
Site Analysis Summary	211
HORTICULTURAL INVENTORY	215
CITY COUCIL RESOLUTIONS	239
BIBLIOGRAPHY	247

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Illustrative Master Plan *	19
2	Key Map for Conceptual Subarea Master Plans *	23
3	Prado West	27
4	Prado East and Spanish Village *	31
5	The Pallisades	35
6	Inspiration Point North	39
7	Inspiration Point South	43
8	Central Operations Station	47
9	Zoo Parking Lot *	51
10	Morley Field and Arizona Landfill	55
11	Golden Hill	59
12	Proposed Land Use and Vicinity Map *	69
13	Proposed Circulation and Parking *	73
14	Pedestrian Trail System *	75
15	Bicycle Trail System *	77
16	Proposed Alternative transportation System *	83
17A	Historical Landmark Zone *	91
<u>17B</u>	<u>Historical Landmark Zone *</u>	<u>92</u>
18	Conceptual Landscape Plan *	101
19	Exterior Lighting Concepts *	109
20	Signage Concepts *	117
21	Bartholomew Plan	153
22	Location Map	159
23	Existing Land Use and Vicinity Map	161
24	Existing Balboa Park Plan	169
25	Land Use Zones	171

* Figures revised in this draft amendment

LIST OF FIGURES, CONTD

26	Estimated Daily Attendance	179
27	Existing Circulation and Parking	183
28	Traffic Analysis	185
29	Elevation Analysis	193
30	Slope Analysis	197
31	Visual Analysis	201
32	Existing Horticultural Inventory (Massing)	202
33	Summary Site Analysis	213
34	Existing Horticultural Inventory (Grid)	215

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Balbao Park Nighttime Parking Supply and Occupancy	188

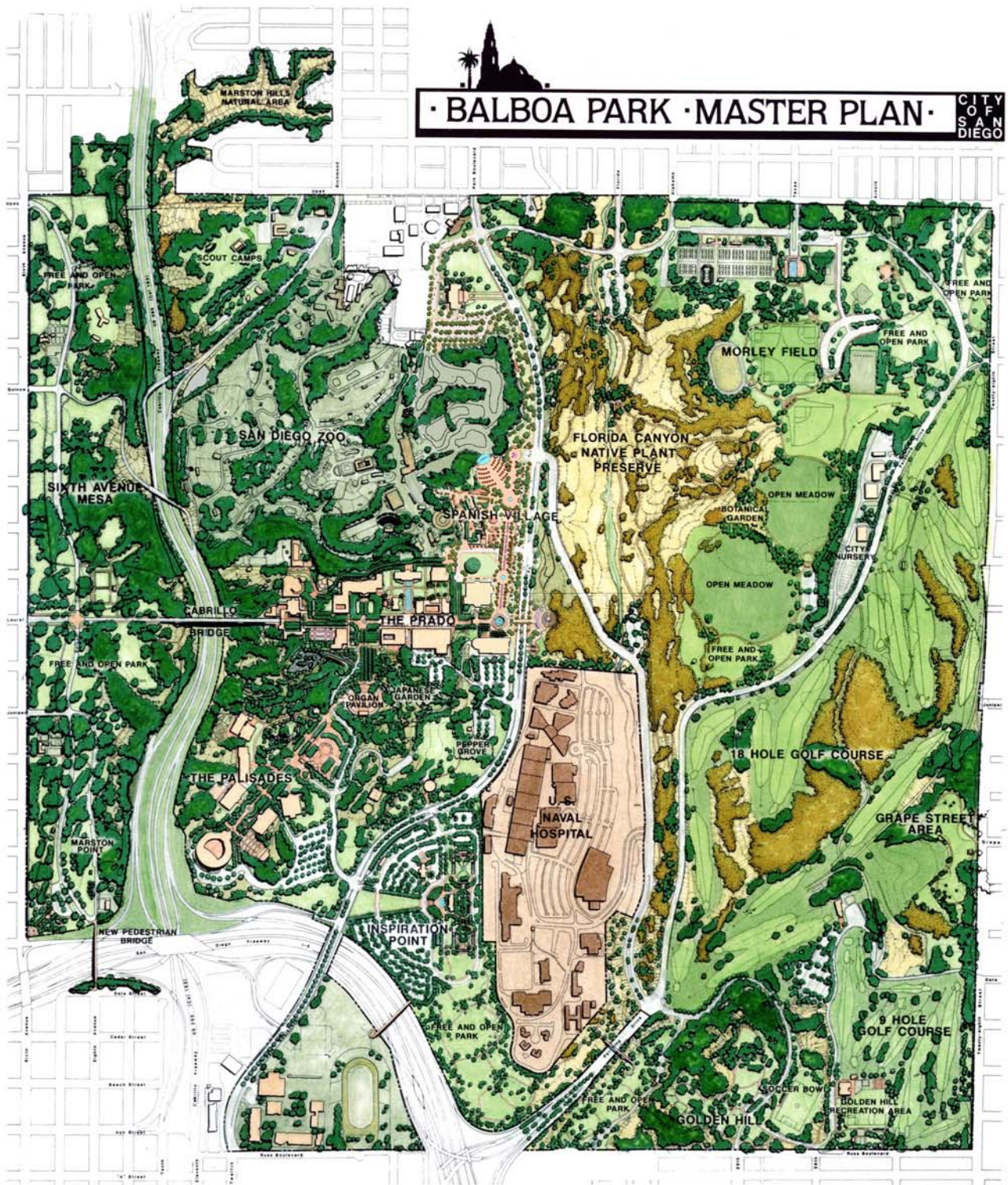


Figure
1



·MASTER PLAN· ILLUSTRATIVE·

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MAY 25 1999

REVISED MAY 2003

THE HOUSE OF PACIFIC RELATIONS

Expand the House of Pacific Relations area by 4,000 square feet including additional landscaping.

THE SPANISH VILLAGE

Consider expanding Spanish Village to provide additional studio area and food service facilities. A Precise Plan should be prepared to guide this redevelopment.

Provide a drop-off and pick-up area north of the Natural History Museum near the Junior Theater.

Close Village Place at Spanish Village. Redesign the entry road.

Retain the existing service road between the Zoo and the museums, known as Old Globe Way, for purposes of controlled emergency and service vehicle access.

~~Reroute pedestrian traffic between the Zoo entry plaza and the Prado through Spanish Village.~~

These improvements are subject to further definition through the Precise Plan process.

CENTRAL OPERATIONS STATION

Reclaim the existing maintenance facility site within the Park as free and open park land.

JAPANESE GARDEN

Complete the Japanese Garden in Gold Gulch.

GOLDEN HILL

Construct a multi-use play field (Soccer Bowl) in the abandoned 26th Street right-of-way.

Provide parking facilities at the Soccer Bowl.

Add a playground or tot lot.

WATER TANK AREA

Retain and improve the Centro Cultural de la Raza.

Remove the other water tank and replace it with a new picnic area as an expansion of Pepper Grove.

INSPIRATION POINT

Redesign and landscape the existing parking lots. Utilize the standards set by the City Landscape Ordinance.

ZOO PARKING LOT

~~Landscape the existing parking lot. Utilize the standards set by the City Landscape Ordinance.~~

Convert the asphalt parking lot to Zoological Garden uses. Create a greenbelt between Park Boulevard and the Zoological Garden that includes the relocated miniature train and a pedestrian walkway.

PARK BOULEVARD PROMENADE AND PARKING STRUCTURE

Construct an approximate 4,800 space below-grade parking structure east of Spanish Village along Park Boulevard. At approximately grade level, construct a pedestrian promenade that creates a strong link between a relocated Zoo entry, Spanish Village, and the Prado.

TRANSIT CENTER/PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Construct a pedestrian bridge connecting the Rose Garden and the Plaza de Balboa across Park Boulevard. A transit center and an east entrance to the Prado should be integrated into the structure.

ENTRY STATEMENTS

Construct two entry statements, one in the vicinity of Park Boulevard and Morley Field Drive and the other on Park Boulevard south of President's Way in the Inspiration Point subarea. The design of the entry statements should be investigated at the precise plan level.

ORGAN PAVILION PARKING STRUCTURE

Construct a 1,000 – 1,500 space parking structure on the existing parking lot site concurrent with the restoration of the Prado and the Palisades areas as pedestrian-oriented plazas.

FLORIDA DRIVE/FLORIDA CANYON

Close Florida Drive from just north of Zoo Place to just south of Zoo Drive/Morley Field Drive and concurrently implement the Florida Canyon Master Plan.

ZOO PLACE

Widen Zoo Place to four lanes between Florida Drive and Park Boulevard for improved access to the Central Mesa from Pershing Drive.

GOLDEN HILL PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE BRIDGE

Construct a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Pershing Drive between Golden Hill Mesa and Inspiration Point. (Old Naval Hospital site.)

WATER RECLAMATION FACILITY

Consider siting a water reclamation facility within the Park to service the Park.

EIGHTH AVENUE PEDESTRIAN BICYCLE BRIDGE

Construct a pedestrian/bicycle bridge on Eighth Avenue over the freeway to the Park at Marston Point.

NORTHEAST AREA

Complete development of the northeast area of the Park in accordance with a Precise Plan.

SIGNAGE

Implement a new signage program.

SAFETY/SECURITY LIGHTING

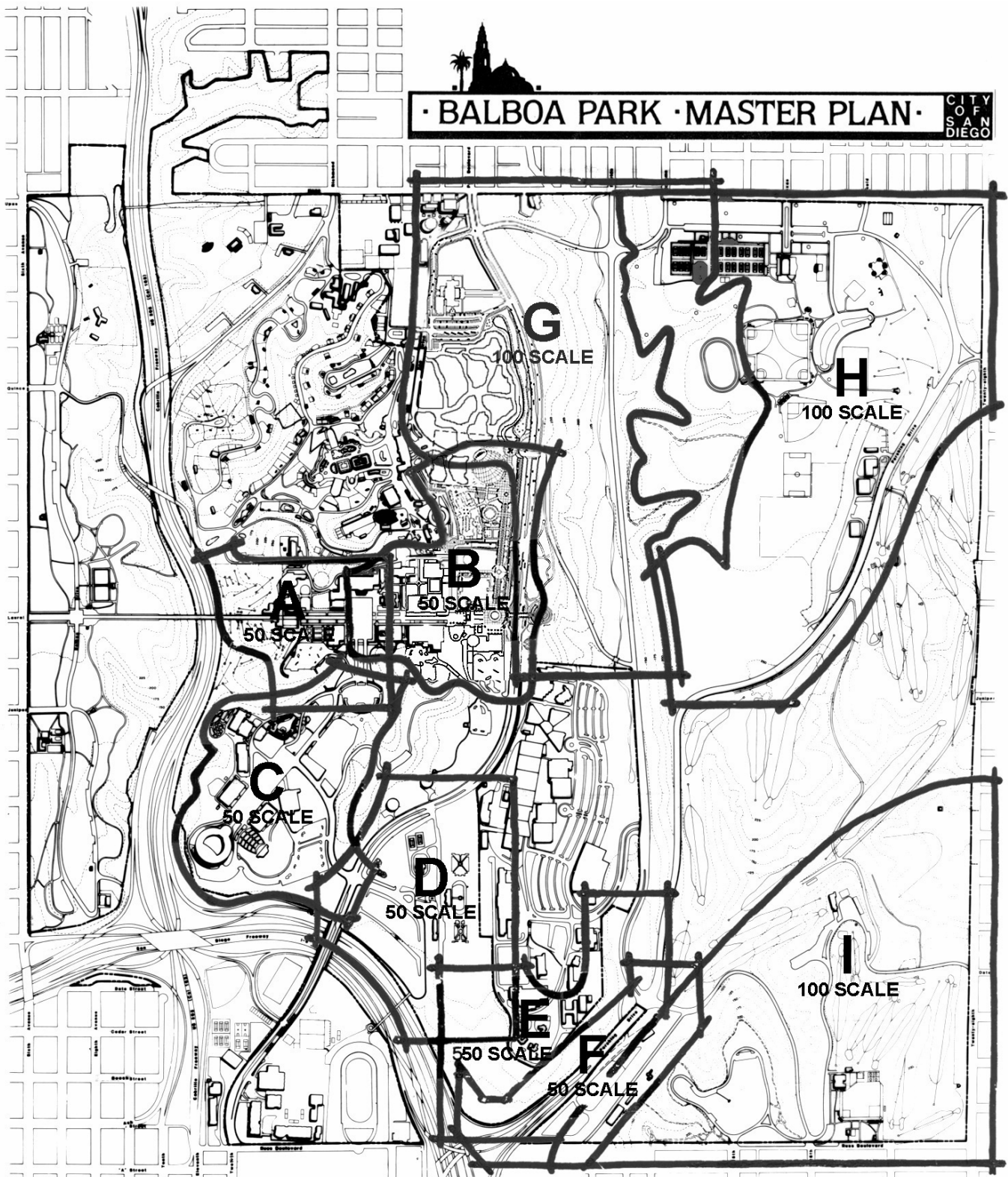
Implement a safety and security lighting program throughout the Park.

INTRA-PARK TRAM

Implement an intra-park tram system.

ARIZONA LANDFILL

Reclaim the landfill area for Park purposes.



A PRADO WEST
B PRADO EAST & SPANISH VILLAGE
C PALISADES
D INSPIRATION POINT NORTH

E INSPIRATION POINT SOUTH
F CENTRAL OPERATIONS STATION
G ZOO PARKING LOT &
FLORIDA CANYON

H MORLEY FIELD &
ARIZONA LANDFILL
I GOLDEN HILL

Figure
2

KEY MAP FOR CONCEPTUAL SUBAREA MASTER PLANS

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EL PRADO EAST AND SPANISH VILLAGE

Figure 4

A wide promenade, the Park Boulevard Promenade, will be created to facilitate the pedestrian movement between the relocated Zoo entry plaza and the Prado. The promenade will pass directly east of ~~through~~ Spanish Village, which will help attract visitors to Spanish Village. Decorative paving, landscape planting, security lighting and attractive site furnishings will enhance the promenade. A below-grade parking structure will be located beneath the promenade.

Village Place will terminate in a cul-de-sac south of Spanish Village. The cul-de-sac will serve as a drop-off area for the Junior Theater, the Casa del Prado and Spanish Village. Enhanced pavement, plantings and site furnishings will be provided.

The Plaza de Balboa will be connected to the Rose Garden across Park Boulevard by a pedestrian bridge. A transit center for public transportation, a viewing plaza, and an eastern gateway to the Prado should be integrated into the structure.

BALBOA PARK MASTER PLAN CITY OF SAN DIEGO



LEGEND

TREES NATIVE SHRUBS	GROUNDCOVERS LAWN	PAVED PEDESTRIAN AREAS WATER FEATURE
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revised May 2003

Figure
4

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN PRADO EAST AND SPANISH VILLAGE

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MAY 26 1989